

A BOOK REVIEW

Presbyterians in World Mission: A Handbook for Congregations, Revised Edition, 1995, 147 pages.

By: G. Thompson Brown

Publishers: Columbia Seminary Press

Reviewer: Samuel H. Moffett

Presbyterians in particular, and anyone with a concern for missions will welcome this timely revised and updated edition of Dr. Brown's 1987 *Presbyterians in World Mission*. Though aimed at Presbyterians to rekindle an awareness of missionary relevance and urgency in their congregations, it is a wake-up call to all America's flagging mainline denominations. It is not just a reminder of past heroics, it is a challenging, easy-to-read presentation of today's global realities.

Its optimism about western Christian missions in refreshing. Brown glories in the rise of the "third world" churches. He fully acknowledges the historic transition from "mission" to "church" in the "mission field" (p. 47 ff.), and the amazing shift in only 100 years from a world in which 82% of all Christians were in the white, western "first world," to the present where more than 50% are now in the "third world" (p. 97). But his incisive accounts of what American Presbyterians are still doing in missions around the world is a reassuring report of the continuing vitality of overseas missionary outreach in at least one American denomination.

Quoting Karl Barth's statement, "The Great Commission is truly the most genuine utterance of the risen Jesus," Brown moves with fair-minded balance and clarity between Bible and history, theory and method, analysis and statistics, evangelism and social responsibility, liberation theology and church growth.

The first three chapters are biblical and theological. The author firmly grounds the theology of mission in the authority of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Scriptures. The missionary message is that God sent His Son into the world, once and for all. This is "good news," he writes, "not good advice." It is unique, unequivocal, and not to be compromised.

Chapter four is for Presbyterians--a thumbnail sketch in 13 pages of American Presbyterian mission history. It is worth the price of the whole book for anyone asked to interpret to a Presbyterian congregation our missionary heritage.

The next four chapters (pp. 47-107) bring the story up to today with an ecumenical bird's eye-view of changing patterns in world mission. He describes "four stages," and proposes a fifth. The first four models are: the Mission (to establish the Church); the Missionary Church, established by missionaries; the Church/mision, as the national church becomes independent of the missionaries; and the Church-Based Mission. In this latter stage, mission becomes a two-way, church to church movement, based neither exclusively in the west, east, north or south, but in national churches around the world. Problems with that pattern, however, have surfaced, as others have pointed out, and suggest to Brown a further change. From "church to church" mission, to a "churches to the world" model in which churches anywhere in the world cooperate in mission with anyone else to any-

where in the world where mission is needed. He goes on to describe what this might mean in his next three chapters, first to missionaries (chap. 6), then to mission policies (chap. 7), and then to the world (chap. 8). This chapter is a gem. It gives us the state of "World Christianity Today," after nearly 2000 years of Christian mission. Don't miss the four tables of the latest statistics: "Christianity and the Religions," "Denom-inational Families," "Protestants," and "Christians on Eight Continents." The book is immensely practical, full of charts and appendices for congregational use, and pithy summaries of unfinished tasks. For Presbyterians it includes helpful guides to link mission committees to their denominational mission agencies. He gives deserved credit to the denomination's mission base in the Worldwide Ministries Division in Louisville, and reminds us of the value of such approved ancillary organizations as the Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, the Medical Benevolence Foundation, and the Outreach Foundation, each with a special focus for designated giving.

The appendices begin with an outline of the Biblical basis of mission, a firm theological foundation for the 2000 year-old but never outdated challenge, "Go ye into all the world..." Another appendix presents a year-round plan for a congregation's mission committee. And there are six pages of suggestions of books on missions and other resources for a local church library.

Who could better write so useful and challenging a book than the author. Brown was born in China of missionary parents, served as a missionary to Korea, was called to head the Division of International Mission of the former "Southern Presbyterian" Church, and is still active as professor emeritus of missions at Columbia Theological Seminary, in Decatur, Georgia.

For almost ten years this has been the best book available on American Presbyterian missions. Now it is better than ever. Don't miss it.

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Retail price is \$11.95. For a limited time (until October 31) can be ordered at the reduced price of \$6.00 from CTS Press, Columbia Seminary, Box 520, Decatur GA 30030. Phone: (404) 289-8952.

WANTED - MISSION PROFESSORS

Due to a number of retirements and one untimely death, a number of PCUSA seminaries are in the process of seeking professors of mission and evangelism.

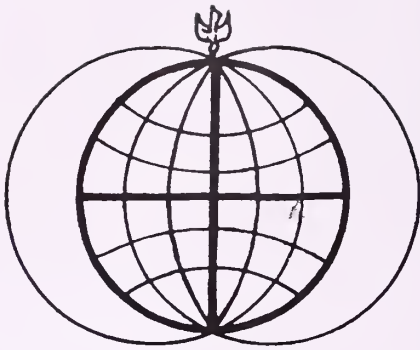
The University of Dubuque Theological Seminary is seeking a professor of mission and evangelism as a replacement for David Scotchmer who died on February 25.

Austin Theological Seminary is engaged in a search process for a successor to John R. "Pete" Hendrick, Professor of Mission and Evangelism until his retirement in July.

San Francisco Theological Seminary is seeking to replace Ben and Carol Weir who have served jointly in the position of evangelism and mission.

Union Theological Seminary in Virginia will be engaged in a search for the position of professor of missiology with the retirement of Kenneth Goodpasture in 1996.

Princeton Seminary will be seeking a professor of mission and ecumenics with the immanent retirement of Alan Neely.



Association of Presbyterians in Cross-Cultural Mission

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THE APCCM AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The APCCM was well represented at the 207th General Assembly in Cincinnati. At the invitation of the Executive Committee of the General Assembly Council and the Worldwide Ministries Division, our president, Stanton R. Wilson and his wife, Marion, were present for two open hearings. The APCCM was one of a number of voluntary organizations invited to take part in the hearings. Stan reported on the activities of the APCCM, expressed concerns and offered suggestions on behalf of the Executive Committee. See Stan's report on page two.

Stan characterized the APCCM as "225 Presbyterians--present, returned, and retired missionaries, Louisville staff, mission professors, seminarians, and mission minded folk from local churches--a slice of the Presbyterian pie." "We have no axe to grind; we are people, Presbyterian types, highly committed to loyal, co-operative mission of our beloved denomination."

He reported that he was "taken by surprise by the large interest in our Cross-cultural emphasis." Also, that the "APCCM is highly regarded for its integrity and high commitment to the world-wide outreach of the Gospel both as a denomination and as ecumenically sensitive missionaries."

Concerns

On behalf of the Association, Stan expressed these concerns:

(1). Since the Church is "a missionary society," the term "missionary" is the most valid word to describe us. Never demean this glorious gutsy word."

(2). "Mission in '95 is both powerful and perilous. There is great merit in PC(USA) presbyteries being directly related in mission with other judicatories in other cultures...there are also dangers inherent in short forays in and out of other cultures. Distortions are rampant.

(3). Designated gifts for mission must never be charged a fee for processing through the Louisville Office.

(4). Note the Global Consultation on World Evangelism's (May, 1995, Seoul) use of the "10/40" window--an imaginary rectangle stretching from ten degrees south to 40 degrees north ...where the greatest concentration of people live among whom there is no Christian witness.

(5). We recommend that the WMD not spread its missionaries too widely, but concentrate on quality as the spirit leads and good mission stewardship warrants.

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Guest Editorial

CRISIS IN MISSION - MORE THOUGHTS

Horace G. Underwood

Tommy Brown's article "A Crisis in Mission" in the November newsletter, followed by a recent opportunity of having dinner with him, when we discussed some of the issues, has encouraged me to share some thoughts. I do so with some trepidation because "political correctness" seems to be as important theologically as in other fields and those who violate it are not even listened to. However, I would like to share some thoughts, even at the risk of such a fate.

Tommy speaks of the "New methods of promotion" a century ago, the heart of which was a commitment to mission even at the risk of a "messy way of doing business" by allowing support for persons and projects that were sometimes against the staff's better judgement. As Tommy implies, that must happen today. The powers that be must be open to other visions, other programs, other concepts than their own, concepts that in my opinion have to some extent contributed to the decline in cross-cultural mission.

After the end of World War II, and particularly after the communist take-over of China, there was great soul-searching among the "main line" denominations about mission programs and policies. The western churches were self-condemned for "imperialism" and "colonialism" and were determined to turn over a new leaf and start in a new direction. What emerged was an emphasis on "cooperation" and "partnership." Ecumenical relations" rather than "mission" became the main point of concern and, intentionally or not, the message came across that missionaries were no longer really necessary or

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